

Brain Gain

Retaining Kentucky Graduates

The vast majority of people who earn degrees at Kentucky's public colleges and universities stay in Kentucky after graduation. In fact, the proportion of alumni who choose to stay in the Commonwealth has increased significantly since the mid-1990s based on results from a new Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education study. The overall percent of graduates who stayed in Kentucky increased from 73 to 86 percent. The percent with a bachelors rose even more from 71 to 87 percent.

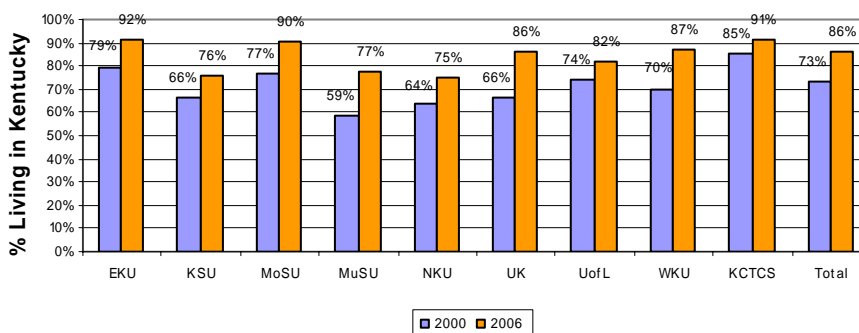
According to a 2000 study, 83 percent of in-state graduates from public institutions were still in the Commonwealth after five years. The 2006 study indicates that the proportion has risen to 95 percent. During a time frame when the number of degrees and awards was increasing, it is a very good sign that not only are more Kentuckians choosing to earn degrees but they are also choosing to remain in the Commonwealth. The actual number of graduates who choose to stay in Kentucky actually increased by 36 percent between 2000 and 2006. These increases cannot help but improve the education level of Kentuckians.

In addition to the growing number of Kentuckians who are choosing to stay, more out-of-state students are also choosing to stay in Kentucky after graduation (37 percent compared to 24 percent in the 2000 study) and roughly half (49 percent) of international students are also choosing to remain after graduation.

Highlights

- 95 percent of in-state graduates from public colleges and universities stay in Kentucky after completing their degree or credential.
- Overall, between 2000 and 2006 the proportion of graduates from public colleges and universities in Kentucky who choose to remain in the state increased from 73 to 86 percent.
- With the increase in the number of degrees and credentials being awarded, the number of graduates who choose to stay in Kentucky actually increased by 36 percent between 2000 and 2006.
- Roughly half (49 percent) of international students are choosing to remain in Kentucky after graduation.
- The proportion of out-of-state students who stay in Kentucky after graduation has increased by more than 50 percent (37 percent in 2006 compared to 24 percent in 2000).
- The percent of students who earn doctorates and stay in Kentucky nearly doubled from 27 to 52 percent.

Retaining Kentucky Graduates
All Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Institution



The Study

In 2000 the CPE conducted a data match with the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet to identify students who graduated approximately five years earlier from one of the state's public institutions to see if they were still in Kentucky. The study included graduates from the 1993-94 and 1994-95 academic years who were still in Kentucky in 2000, which was defined as either having a Kentucky driver's license or picture identification. In 2000 the CPE also performed a match with the Unemployment Insurance databases in the state; however, the Council was unable to replicate that in the 2006 study. Therefore, all comparisons will be solely between results from both the 2000 and the 2006 studies based solely on matches with the driver's license and identification databases.

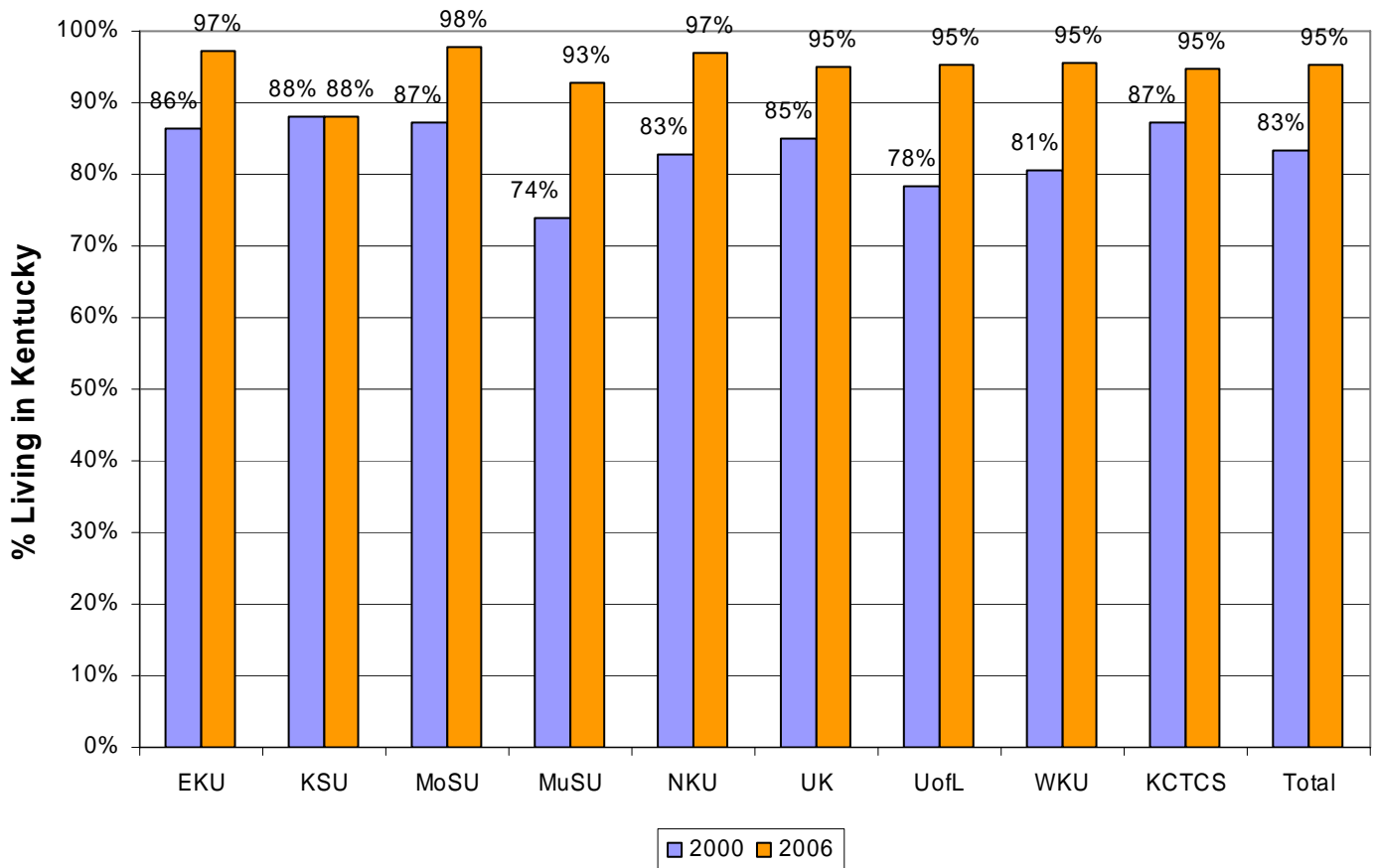
The Transportation databases include all Kentuckians who either have a driver's license or a state picture identification card. This was the first in-state and out-of-state migration study of college graduates conducted in Kentucky. Using a similar methodology, the CPE conducted a second data match with Transportation in 2006 of students who had graduated during the 2000-01 academic year. During this most recent data match, students who had graduated in the previous ten years, as well as drop-outs and current students, were also

included to allow for additional studies to better understand migration over time as well as regional migration within the Commonwealth. Without the assistance of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, this study would not have been possible.

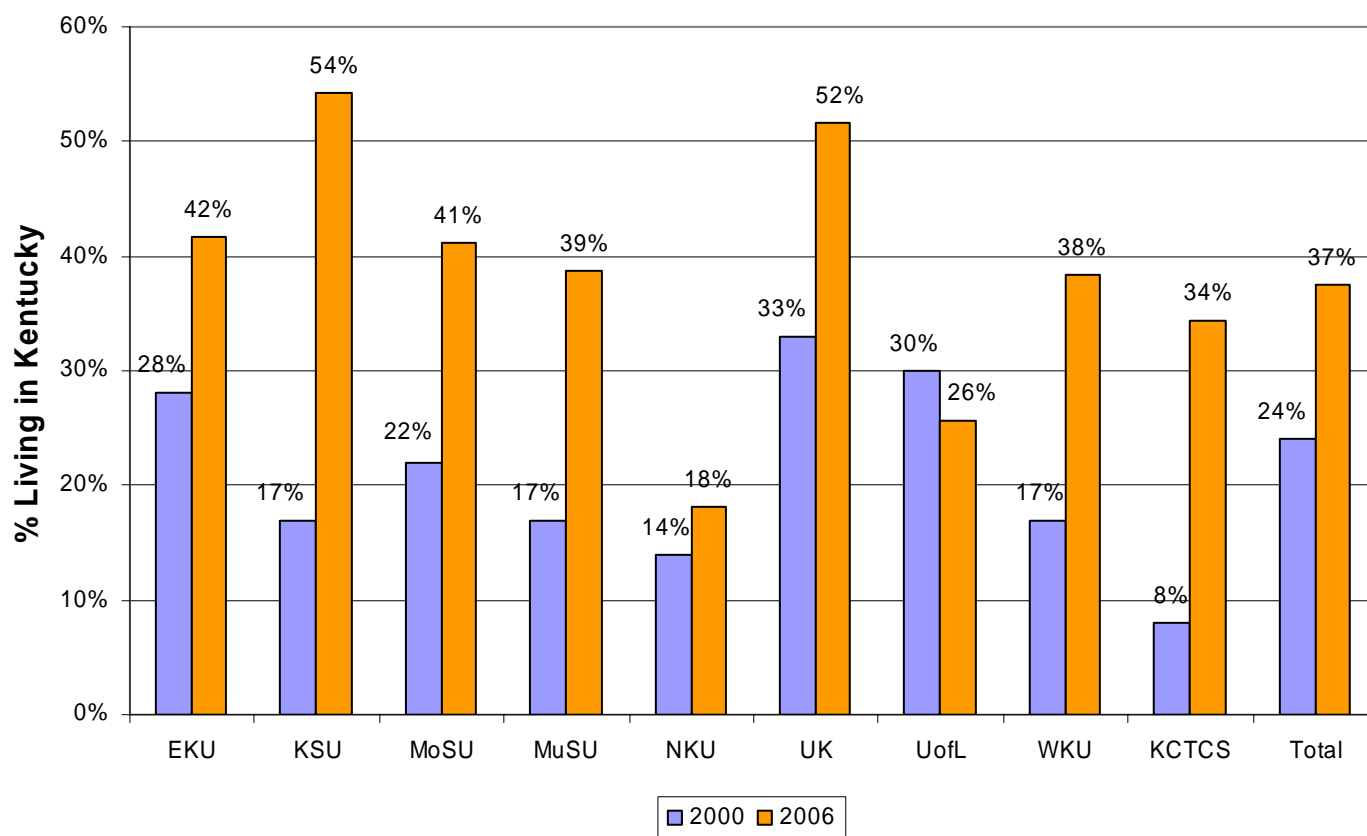
In-State, Out-of-State, and International Students

As one might expect, native Kentuckians who go to an in-state public college or university are more likely to remain in the Commonwealth than students from out-of-state who earn degrees here (95 percent compared to 37 percent in 2006). However, the proportion of out-of-state students who stay in Kentucky after graduation has increased by more than 50 percent (37 percent in 2006 compared to 24 percent in 2000). Overall, in-state graduates from all of Kentucky's public colleges and universities are still more likely to stay in the state five years after graduation than their counterparts in the 2000 study. All of the public institutions showed increasing rates for in-state students who stay with the exception of Kentucky State whose rates remained the same compared to those in the 2000 study.

**Retaining Kentucky Graduates
In-State Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Institution**



Retaining Kentucky Graduates Out-of-State Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later Kentucky Public Institutions - By Institution



People occasionally question the utility of enrolling out-of-state students at public institutions. While it is true that out-of-state and international students are not as likely to stay in Kentucky after graduation, a growing proportion do choose to make the Commonwealth their home and ultimately contribute to the economy. The proportion of out-of-state graduates who stay in Kentucky varies from institution to institution. In some instances, such as at Kentucky State University and the University of Kentucky, more than half of out-of-state graduates choose to stay in the state and, overall, nearly half (49 percent) of the international students who earn degrees here also choose to make Kentucky their home.

in Kentucky than their counterparts from five years earlier. In the previous study only two out of five of those who received doctorates stayed in-state. In the 2006 study nearly two out of three (65 percent) doctoral graduates stayed in Kentucky five years after completing their degrees. The proportion of out-of-state students who completed doctoral degrees and stayed nearly doubled between the two studies (52 percent compared to 27 percent in the 2000 study).

Differences by Major or Degree Area and Level

Different majors or degree areas retain students within the state at different levels. Obviously the job market and economic outlook varies in Kentucky and some professions may not be present in abundance to accommodate as many students as the institutions are graduating.

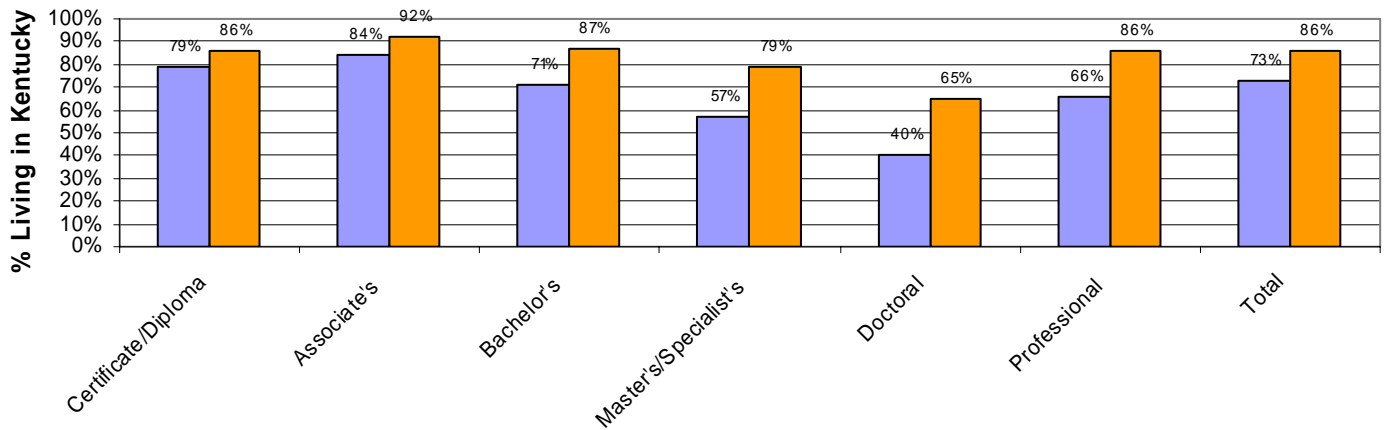
The overall picture of selected majors at various levels shows that professions such as nursing and education seem to retain more people than high-tech fields such as engineering (92 and 88 percent, respectively, compared to 78 percent). This seems plausible since there are significant numbers of nurses and teachers in every community across the Commonwealth. However, when broken out by degree level, at least at the bachelor's degree level, the engineers were actually slightly

Variances by Degree Level

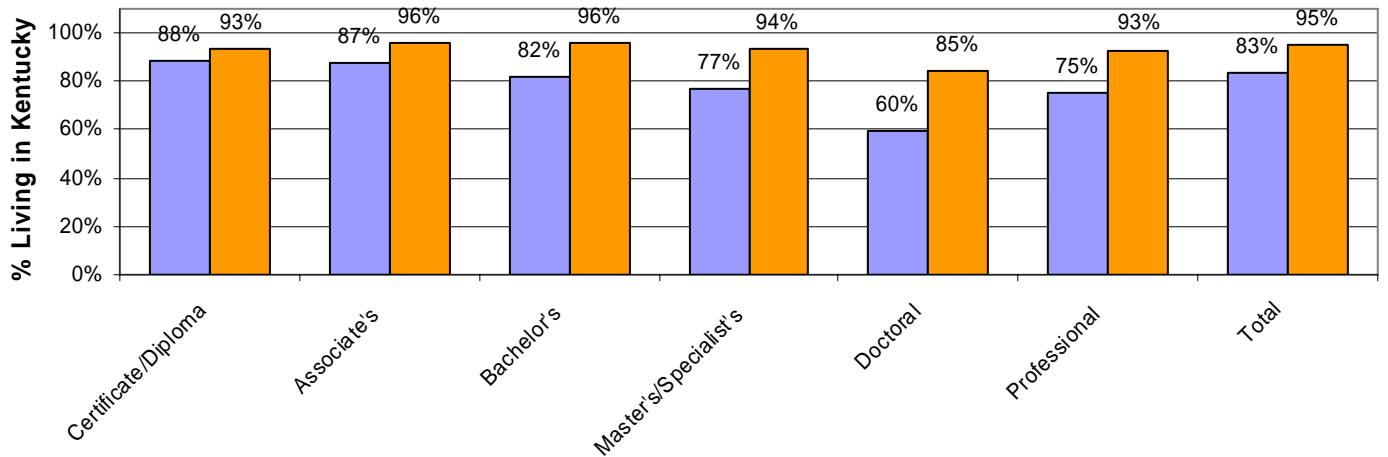
Graduates with different levels of education vary in terms of how likely they are to remain in Kentucky. As illustrated by the 2000 study, and as one might expect due to possibly expanded job opportunities, a student who completes an associate degree is slightly more likely to stay than one who completes a bachelor's, who is more likely to stay than one who completes a master's, who is more likely to remain than one who completes a doctorate.

Those same relationships showed up again in the 2006 study but graduates from all levels are even more likely to stay

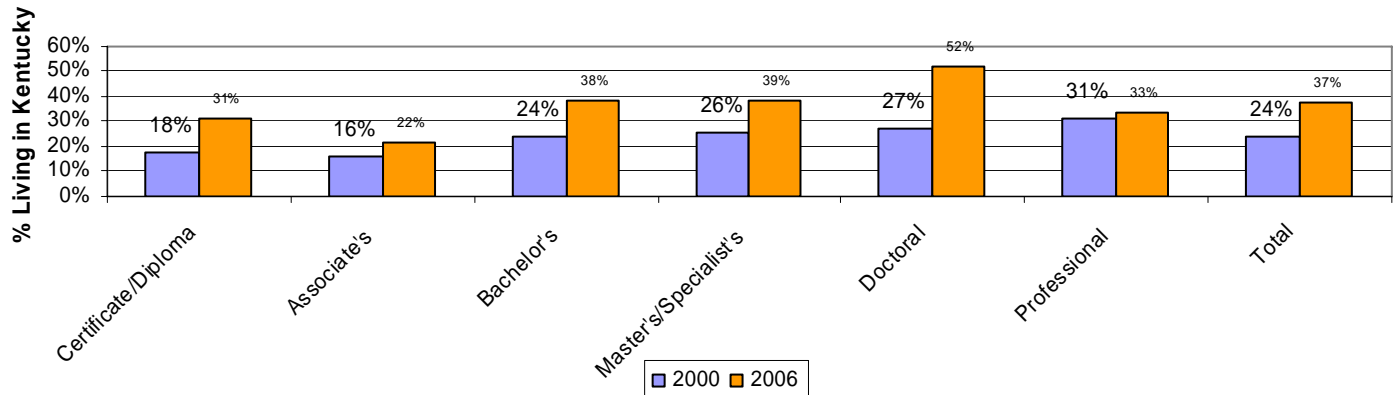
Retaining Kentucky Graduates
All Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Award Level



Retaining Kentucky Graduates
In-State Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Award Level



Retaining Kentucky Graduates
Out-of-State Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Award Level



more likely than those with degrees in education to stay in the state five years later.

As expected, graduates from the master’s and doctoral programs are actually bringing down the overall figures for some academic programs. Specifically, the state does not seem to do a very good job of providing an environment that encourages graduate degree recipients in engineering or business to stay. This may be a reflection of the job market in these fields for workers with advanced degrees and credentials.

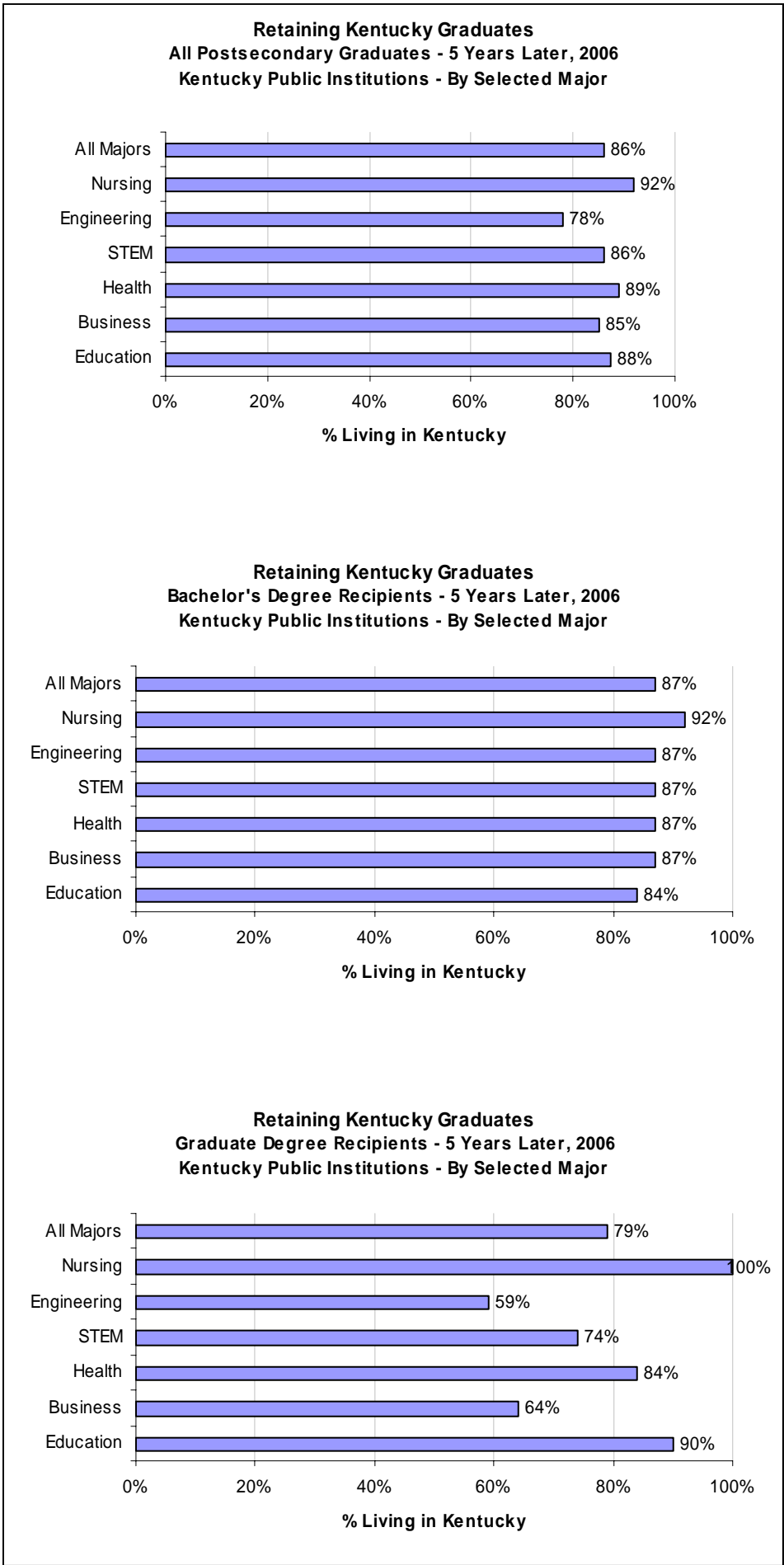
Gender, Ethnicity, Age, and Migration

Caucasians are slightly more likely to stay in Kentucky than minorities, and females are slightly more likely than males to stay in the state after graduation. Examining the results by age defined as traditional (24 and younger) and nontraditional (25 and older) does show an unexpected lack of difference. Common sense might make people think that the younger, traditional-aged students with fewer ties would be more likely to leave the state for other opportunities than more mature students who often are expected to have families, jobs, or other ties to the region. In the overall results for all degree levels, traditional students were slightly more likely to stay in Kentucky than nontraditional students (88 percent compared to 84 percent). When breaking it down to just students who earned a bachelor’s degree, there was only a 1 percent difference between the age groups. Apparently, younger, traditional-aged students are just as likely as adult students to choose to stay in Kentucky.

What does it all mean?

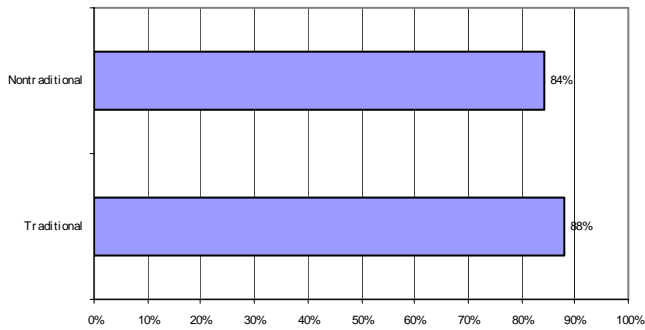
Overall, the results are very promising both in terms of Kentucky’s ability to generate as well as retain an educated citizenry. In order to achieve the 2020 objective of reaching the national average in terms of the percentage of Kentuckians with a bachelor’s degree or above, this improvement needs to continue.

The vast majority of Kentuckians who earn degrees from the state’s public colleges and universities



Retaining Kentucky Graduates

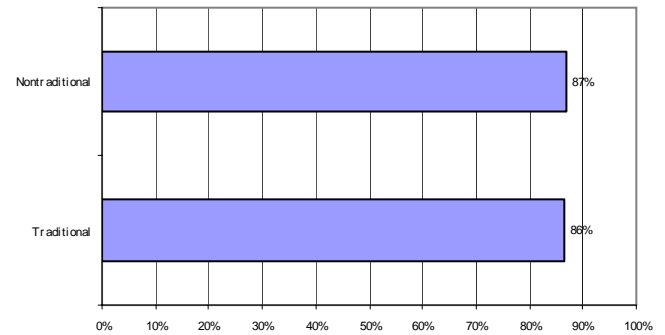
All Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later, 2006
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Age



% Living in Kentucky

Retaining Kentucky Graduates

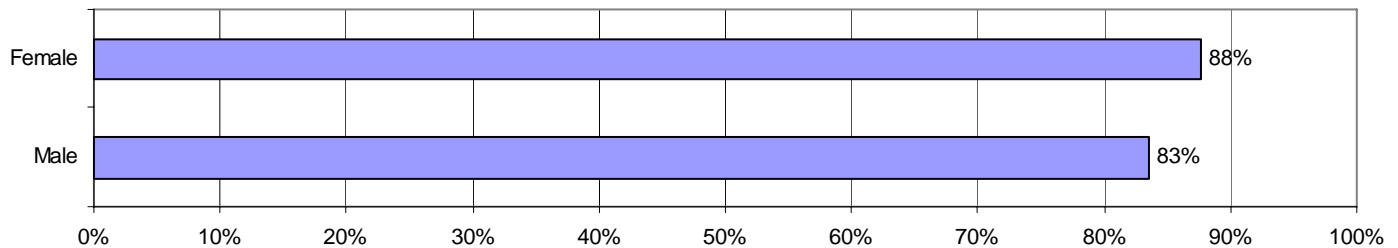
Bachelor Degree Recipients - 5 Years Later, 2006
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Age



% Living in Kentucky

Retaining Kentucky Graduates

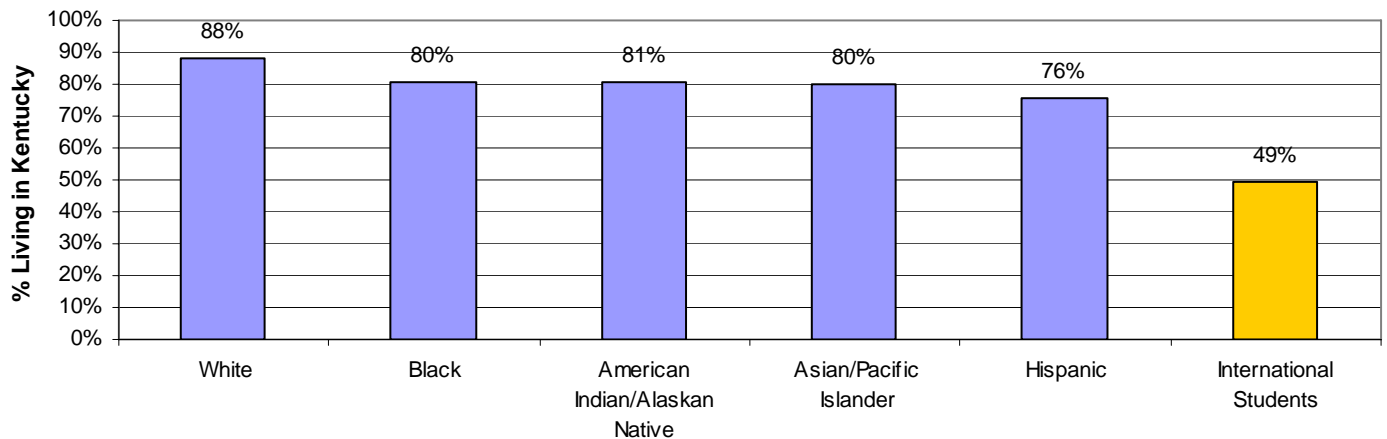
All Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later, 2006
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Gender



% Living in Kentucky

Retaining Kentucky Graduates

All Postsecondary Graduates - 5 Years Later, 2006
Kentucky Public Institutions - By Race/Ethnicity

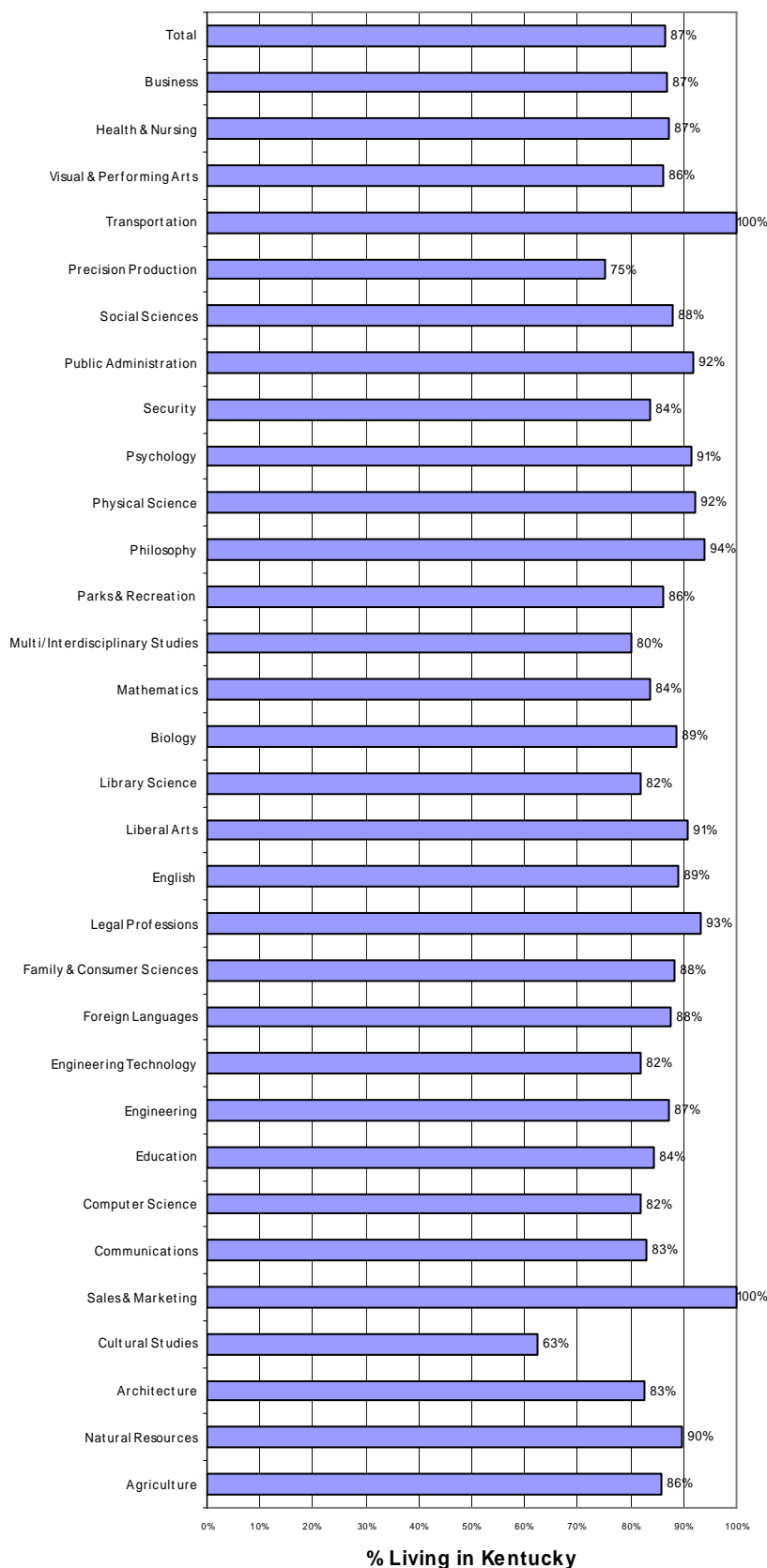


choose to stay in Kentucky and a rapidly growing proportion of out-of-state and international students are also choosing to stay. This raises important questions about the value of importing students. There is a definite long-term impact on the Commonwealth as more than one-third of the out-of-state students and about half of the international students stay to make Kentucky their homes and contribute to the economy.

In general, the state is not losing very many of its associate and bachelor's degree completers. However, only about two-thirds of the graduate degree recipients are staying. More work should be done to assess the reasons for this and to evaluate how many people with advanced degrees are emigrating to the Commonwealth.

Next steps for this study include evaluating the information in greater depth. While in-state and out-of-state migration are important, it is also important to understand how people migrate within the Commonwealth from rural to urban areas and vice-versa. According to the maps at the end of this report, there does not appear to be a significant difference in the proportion of graduates from Kentucky's various counties who stay in-state verses those who leave. In general, the vast majority stay. At best it may seem like a slightly lower proportion from the western part of the state choose to stay but the differences are minimal.

Retaining Kentucky Graduates Bachelor's Degree Recipients - 5 Years Later, 2006 Kentucky Public Institutions - By Major

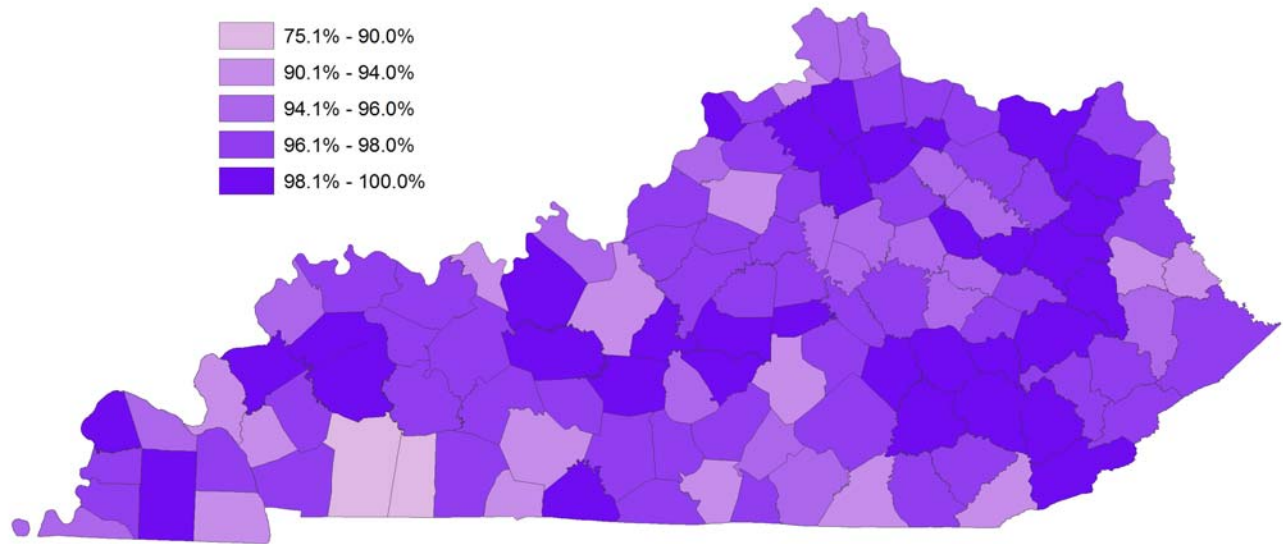


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For more research and data about postsecondary education in Kentucky, visit the Kentucky Postsecondary Data Portal:
<http://cpe.ky.gov/info>

Retaining Kentucky Graduates

Percentage of Postsecondary Graduates Who Remain in Kentucky
Five Years Later, 2006



Retaining Kentucky Graduates

Percentage of Bachelor's Degree Recipients Who Remain in Kentucky
Five Years Later, 2006

